



MIAMI TOWNSHIP FIRE & EMS

CLERMONT COUNTY, OHIO

MEDICAL PROTOCOLS



RESPIRATORY DISTRESS (Congestive Heart Failure)

Historical Findings

1. Age > 15.
2. Patient complains of worsening shortness of breath.
2. Patient may have a past medical history of heart failure.

Physical Findings

1. Tachypnea.
2. Skin is pale and diaphoretic.
3. Lung exam may reveal diminished sounds, rales and or wheezing (cardiac asthma).
4. May have accessory muscle and show sign of fatigue.
5. May have jugular venous distention and or peripheral edema.

Protocol

1. Initiate contact; reassure, and explain procedures.
2. Assess and secure the patient's airway and provide oxygen per the airway, oxygen and ventilation protocol.
3. Perform patient assessment, obtain vital signs and begin cardiac monitoring.
4. Consider Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP).
5. Initiate IV access with a saline lock or 0.9% normal saline KVO.
6. Acquire a 12 Lead ECG and maintain cardiac monitoring at all times.
7. If wheezing is present on lung exam administer albuterol (Proventil) aerosol 2.5 mg in 3.0 ml normal saline mixed with ipratropium (Atrovent) 500 microgram in 2.5 ml normal saline via hand held nebulizer, or in-line with CPAPs or Medrafter, if intubated.
8. Repeat Step 3 using albuterol (Proventil) aerosol only as long as patient's condition is improving to a maximum of five (5) doses.



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9. Administer nitroglycerin (Nitrolingual) 0.4 mg SL every 3-5 minutes for a total of 3 doses.
 - A. Withhold or discontinue ***all*** nitrates for any of the following:
 - i. Systolic blood pressure \leq 100 mmHg.
 - ii. Recent erectile dysfunction drug use:
 1. Viagra \leq 24hrs.
 2. Cialis, levitra \leq 48 hrs.
 - B. Use nitrates with caution in patients with right ventricular infarction (RVI).
10. Administer nitroglycerin paste (Nitro-bid) 1 inch TD to the left chest concurrently with sublingual nitroglycerin if systolic blood pressure remains \geq 100 mmHg systolic.
11. Administer furosemide (Lasix) slow IV at a dose equal to the patient's normal oral dose if the following four (4) criteria are met:
 - A. The patient has a systolic blood pressure $>$ 100 mmHg, AND
 - B. The patient is currently taking furosemide (lasix), AND
 - C. The patient has a history of congestive heart failure, AND
 - D. The respiratory distress is consistent with past episodes related to the patient's CHF.
12. Contact medical command for orders for furosemide (Lasix) if the patient does not meet the above criteria.
13. Allow the patient to sit up in a position of comfort for transport.